FYI

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Missouri's education commissioner ousted

BY MARÁ ROSE WILLIAMS, JASON HANCOCK AND KATY BERGEN
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Gov. Eric Greitens spent months trying to put enough like-minded people on the Missouri Board of Education to fulfill his goal of ousting Education Commissioner Margie Vandeven.

On Friday, he finally got his wish.

Newly appointed board member Eric Teeman, a former Raytown alderman whose appointment was announced just before Friday's education board meeting, helped secure the 5-3 vote needed to remove Vandeven.

After the closed-session vote, Greitens called the board's action a win for kids, teachers and families.

"We need to: raise teacher pay, support public schools, and help students succeed," the governor said in a statement. "We need to make sure that the money Missourians spend on schools gets out of the bureaucracy — and into the classroom."

Reached by phone, Teeman said he would not comment about his vote.

"The governor has sent a press release," Teeman said.

SEE EDUCATION, 10A

Flynn pleads guilty to lying to FBI, will aid Russia inquiry

SUSAN WALSH AP

Former Trump national security adviser Michael Flynn, center, arrives at federal court in Washington on Friday.

Washington Post

WASHINGTON

Former national security adviser Michael Flynn pleaded guilty Friday to lying to the FBI about his contacts with Russian Ambassador Sergey Kislyak, an ominous sign for the White House, as Flynn is cooperating in the ongoing probe of possible coordination between the Trump campaign and the Kremlin to influence the 2016 election.

When he was forced out of the White House in February, officials said Flynn had misled the administration, including Vice President Mike Pence, about his contacts with Kislyak. But court records and people familiar with the contacts indicated he was acting in consultation with senior Trump transition officials, including President Donald Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner, in his dealings with the diplomat.

> "IT HAS BEEN EXTRAORDINARILY PAINFUL TO ENDURE THESE MANY MONTHS OF FALSE ACCUSATIONS OF 'TREASON' ... BUT I RECOGNIZE THAT THE ACTIONS I ACKNOWLEDGED IN COURT TODAY WERE WRONG.
>
> *Michael Flynn*

Flynn's plea revealed that he was in touch with senior Trump transition officials before and after his communications with the ambassador.

The pre-inauguration communications with Kislyak involved efforts to undermine policy decisions being made by the Obama administration – on sanctions on Russia and a U.N. resolution on Israel – potential violations of the law.

Flynn said in a statement: "It has been extraordinarily painful to endure these many months

SEE FLYNN, 2A

'We have the votes' on tax bill, Senate leader says

BY ALAN FRAM, MARCY GORDON AND STEPHEN OHLEMACHER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON

Republicans used a burst of eleventh-hour horse-trading Friday to edge a $1.4 trillion tax bill to the brink of Senate passage, as a party starved all year for a major legislative triumph took a giant step toward giving President Donald Trump one of his top priorities by Christmas.

"We have the votes," Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., declared after leaders swayed holdout senators by agreeing to fatten tax breaks for millions of businesses and let people deduct local property taxes.

Party leaders hoped for Senate approval later Friday on a measure that focuses the bulk of its tax reductions on businesses and higher-earning individuals, gives more modest breaks to others and would be the boldest rewrite of the nation's tax system since 1986.

Republicans touted the package as one that would benefit people of all incomes and ignite the economy. Even an official

SEE TAXES, 10A

Jackson County jail director resigns

BY MIKE HENDRICKS
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Joe Piccinini inherited leadership of the troubled Jackson County jail amid an FBI investigation into guards using excessive force on prisoners.

Now, more than two years later, with other troubles mounting and the county's elected leaders squabbling over the jail's future, Piccinini has resigned his six-figure job as director of corrections.

"He came in at a tough time," County Executive Frank White said in announcing the leadership change at a Friday afternoon news conference.

Piccinini tendered his resignation the day before, White said, and both agreed that new management was needed.

Piccinini's deputy, Diana Turner, will serve as acting director. Unlike Piccinini, she has corrections experience, a requirement for the new permanent director.

White said a nationwide search will begin next week.

Piccinini had weathered increasing criticism from county legislators alarmed at news of continuing violence and security

SEE JAIL, 11A

FYI

MARINE KILLED IN WWII HOME AT LAST

More than 74 years after being killed in the battle of Tarawa in World War II, Donald Tolson came home. **8A**

LOCAL

STATE-RUN HOSPITAL DROPS POLICY

Kansas state hospital ends a policy that told employees not to talk to legislators. **3A**

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